NUMB. XX.

The Prompter.

To be Continued TUESDAYS and FRIDAYS.

A Satyr's Smile *is ſharper than his* Frown.
Duke of *Bucks* — Eſſay on Poetry.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17. 1735.

A PERT Fellow, who was ſent with the following Letter, took upon him to inſiſt on an Anſwer, becauſe he brought it from *Lady* —— (Her other Name my Publiſher has unluckily *forgot*) — There is in it ſo *true* a Taſte of the *Town*, that I am almoſt of Opinion ſhe is *really* a Perſon of *Quality*, notwithſtanding ſome reaſonable *Doubts*, which might ariſe from the *Stile*, and the *Spelling*.

Mr. Prompter,

" MY Father, *tho'* a *Juſtice of Peace*, was a " Man of *fine Senſe* and *good Humour*, and " wou'd laugh, among his Friends, at the *feeble* " *Activity* of ſome *buſier Incumbents* of the *Bench*: " Of whom he wou'd ſay, *That if they were but* " *able to* Think, *in the* Spirit *wherewith they* Act, " *They wou'd* ſtir Leſs, *to* more *Purpoſe*: For " (ſays He) *Reformation* muſt flow like a *River*; " If it begins at the *Top*, It will eaſily *move down-* " *wards*: — But, It wou'd be giving this *Stream* " the Qualifications of a CRAB, to expect it ſhou'd " *creep* BACKWARDS.

" I PASS few Days of my Life, without finding " one Occaſion or other to reflect on the *Juſtneſs* " of my Father's Remark; and have, therefore, " Reaſon to hope good Conſequences from the " following ſhort *Poſtſcript*, which we have ſeen at " the Foot of the *Hay-market* Advertiſement for " *Opera*.

" N. B. *Whereas an Abuſe has been diſcovered in* " *admitting Perſons into the Footmens Gallery*; " *Notice is hereby given, that, for the Future,* " *no Perſons out of Livery will be admitted* " *into that Gallery.*

" HERE, Mr. *Prompter*, Reformation begins " *High enough*, in all Reaſon; and, ſince it is ſo " natural an Inference, that it's Effects will *deſcend*, " It cannot, I hope, be long, before they will be " *felt* in the *Boxes*; where, in my humble Opinion, " no *Footman* (of what *Quality* ſoever) has more " Right to obtrude Himſelf, than one of thoſe " *Taylors*, or other *unting'd Interlopers*, can have, " to be admitted in the *Regions above us*; where " it ſeems they took the Liberty of placing them- " ſelves, to the Excluſion of *worthier Gentlemen*, " who were Regular *Companions* of the *Order*.

" I ASSURE you, Sir, we ſtand more in need of " ſuch a Regulation, than you perhaps have ima- " gined: And you will *believe* it, from this In- " ſtance, which I judge neceſſary to lay before you. " — I came in, at *Drury-Lane* Theatre, about the " Middle of the ſecond Act of a Play, by which " Time, I took it for granted, that none of thoſe " dirty Fellows that are ſent to *keep Places* wou'd " be found, toward the Front of the Boxes: — " But how *ſadly* was I miſtaken! There ſat Two " of them, on a Bench juſt before me, whoſe ſhort " Hair, round Heads, and ſquare Shoulders, were " as offenſive to my *Delicacy*, as a certain *medi-* " *tated* Clumſineſs in their Behaviour; for which " they might have *truſted* to *Nature*. — I found " my Pride under infinite Agitation, at their uncivil " Inſenſibility of my *Neighbourhood*; For they " wou'd ſometimes *loll* forward, ſometimes *throw* " themſelves Sidelong; ſometimes ſhoot out a " ſhort *Laugh*; and now and then, half ſmother " an *Oath*, mutter out a *Contempt*, or ſwell a *Note* " of *Admiration*; as Occaſions offer'd on the Stage: " And all this they wou'd do, with a *provoking* " *Negligence* of Every Body round them; and a " moſt *aſtoniſhing Air*, of Deciſiveneſs, and Self- " ſufficiency.

" AT laſt, I cou'd bear it no longer; but, with " a Voice of Reſentment, demanded to know, " WHAT LADY THEY SERV'D? To which one of " them, tipping the Wink upon the other, made " Anſwer, *That they had, as yet, the Good-fortune* " *to* ſuppoſe *themſelves* their own Maſters: *But* " *the Danger of their Situation, ſo* near me, *gave* " *'em* Fears *of an approaching* Dependency. — You " may be ſure, that This *nettled* me, — I was now " ten Times Redder than before: I felt all the Fire " of my Heart in my *Cheeks*; and told 'em, down- " right, and aloud, *that* they were a Couple *of* " Impudent Fellows, *and ought to be* STRIPP'D, *for* " forgetting *their* Condition.

" BUT, *now* comes the *Shock*, Mr. *Prompter*; " and I leave *you* to judge its Effect, when I have " *told* you their Anſwer. *Let us* give way, *cried* " *One of them*, (riſing to go) *Let us give way*, " MY LORD, *to the Indignation of this Lady*; *ſhe* " *is too Handſome, to have been much* us'd *to* Con- " tradiction. — *I had rather*, SIR FRANCIS, *re-* " *plied the other*, change my Dreſs, *than my* Place; " *if, by appearing* what I am, *I cou'd deſerve the* " *Diſtinction of* ſitting ſo near *her*.

" Now, for Heaven's ſake, put People in mind, " that, if they wou'd be *known* for what they *are*, " they ſhou'd never affect to *appear*, what *they are* " *not*. — FOR, *Dare take me*, if it has ever fallen " to my Lot, to ſee, above *five* or *ſix* Perſons of " *Condition*, whoſe CLOATHS did not contribute to " their *Diſtinction*, a great deal more manifeſtly " than their COUNTENANCE. — Pray, put me in- " to your *Prompter*, the firſt Opportunity you have; " and oblige,

Your bluſhing Reader,
FIDELIA.

The Letter, that follows, next, is from a *Quaker*: One, of that *Turn*, which is commonly diſtinguiſhed by the Epithet DRY. — In Return for the Pains He

He has taken to ſhew me his *Wit*, I ſhall place him between *two Fires*, (that is, between *two Theatres*) — There, if He likes what is *New*, and *Uncommon*, He may *look round*, and be *ſatisfied:* while, on the other Side, by Way of Recompence for his Entertainment, The *Honeſt Simplicity* he carries along with him, will be, altogether, as *New* and *Uncommon*, to the *Politer* Good Company, about him.

Friend Prompter,

" THOU mayeſt have heard a *proverbial Saying*, among Men of the World, where they " wou'd confeſs their own *Ignorance* of an *Argument*, for Lack of an Information thereupon, — " and it is thus: — *I know no more of the Matter*, " (they will ſay) *than a* BROOMSTICK.

" In Truth, if thou canſt not, in ſome Degree, " enlighten thy Readers, concerning the *Foundation* " of this *Saying*, It may bring forth Suppoſitions, " that there hath been manifeſt *Want* of *Wit*, in " *thy Family*.

" BUT, thou wilt take in good Part this *jocular* " *Conception*, from thy

Friend, and Reader,

Ebenezer Shun-button.

I HAVE taken *Alarm*, at this Letter, and ſome others, inſinuating *Like Gueſſes*, to the Diſreputation of *our Houſe:* Inſomuch that I perceive it neceſſary, in Imitation of a laudable Practice among Perſons of High *Rank*, and *Deſcent*, to *emblazon* my *own Eminence*, by a *Roll* from the *Heralds Office*, making manifeſt the Diſtinction of my *Anceſtors*.

I SHALL therefore find ſome ſpeedy Occaſion, to trace down my Pedigree, to *my Perſon*, who am the *One Hundred and thirteenth*, in a direct and unbroken Line, from the *Teutonick* Original of the *Broomſticks*.

AT preſent, It ſhall ſuffice me, to confeſs, in Contempt of the ſneering *Sectarian*, Mr. *Shun-button*, (whoſe Inſinuation no *Orthodox Believer* cou'd have wanted *Grace* to be *aſham'd* of) that we have, at leaſt, had *One* Great Man in our Family, who was *no wiſer than He ſhou'd be:* — But, what is ſtill more to our Honour, He was as *Honeſt*, as if he had been *ſmarter*.

HE was, however, a *Broomſtick* but by Derivation: For his *Vigour* wou'd have given him no Title at all to the Character. — He *ſwept* nothing out of his Houſe, but *Knowledge* and *Integrity:* and ſuffer'd it to be over-run with *Filchers*, and *Flattery*. — He had the *good-natur'd Knack* of ſaying, to his upper Servants, YOU *know beſt* — YOU *know beſt*, — and *ſuppos'd* himſelf *Maſter*, ſo long, without *Purpoſe*, or *Participation*, that at Length, He brought ſuch *Odium*, on the more *Active* Race He had ſprung from, that it became a Proverb, when People wou'd expreſs their Contempt of an Inſignificant Good-meaner, to ſay, *He knows no more of it, than a* BROOMSTICK.

SUCH *Care* ſhou'd Men take of their *Conduct*, for the Sakes of their *Poſterity!* — Had All the *Deſcendants* of our Great Founder *ſeen*, like *Him*, with no Eyes but their *own*, and ſuffer'd nothing to be done, in their *Name*, but what was really their *Wiſh*, or their *Purpoſe*, I, who live ſo long after, in an Age ſo *unlike His*, and ſo unworthy of his *Virtues*, ſhou'd have had no Occaſion to *bluſh*, at being put in mind, by this Milkſop of a Quaker, that there had been ſo contemptible a *Weakneſs*, in my Family.

To the Author of the Prompter.

SIR,

" I WAS very much pleas'd with the Generoſity " of a miſtaken Purpoſe of yours; where, in " your 13th Paper, you are for *opening our Harle-* " *quin's Mouth*, — But, alas! He ought *never* to " *ſpeak:* ſince his Tongue wants thoſe *Documents*, " to which his *Heels* have been *Educated*. — You " have not perhaps *heard*, that His *Underſtanding* " was *born Deaf*; But, you know, it is a natural " Conſequence, that It can never be taught *Ut-* " *terance*, with any Significance, or Articulation.

" FOR this very Reaſon, it is, methinks, an *Im-* " *propriety* worthy your Cenſure, that, notwithſtand- " ing our Harlequin is *All Heel*, yet he muſt paſs " for the *Head* of a Theatre. — It is not ſo, with " his Elder Brother, of *France*; who, they ſay, " never *moves*, without *Meaning*, never *ſpeaks*, " without *Wit*, never *looks*, without *Humour*. — If " ſo, Mr. *Prompter*, WIT, HUMOUR, and MEAN- " ING, are the Beſt Pretenſions He cou'd have, to " be *Paramount* of a *Company*. — But, on our *dumb* " *Stage*, where *mere Heels* (that is, HEELS ONLY) " are *uppermoſt*, Common Senſe, after having been " chang'd to a *Beaſt*, ſeems now to be thrown on " her *Back*, and lies kicking up her *Legs*, in *Con-* " *vulſions*.

" I AM, therefore, afraid, the Intelligence which " you lately receiv'd, of your STRAY's being *found*, " in the *Country*, was a Piece of News, *too good* " *to be true*. — Had ſhe got out of *London*, ALIVE, " one might have Hopes of *her appearing again*, " when the *Weather* grows *better*. — But, alas! " It is Evident, to a Demonſtration, that Theſe " Theatrical *Butchers* have *knock'd her down*, in " their Slaughter-Houſe: And there, finding her " Skin a little too *tough* for their Piercing, They " are *Laying on*, all their *own Weight*, and That " of their *Lumber*, with Intention to *ſmother* her, " as faſt as They are able.

" THIS being viſibly the Caſe, what a Providence " it is, that Theſe bloody-minded *Overlayers*, hap- " pen'd to be ſo *Light*, in their *Preſſure!* — No " Doubt, ſhe cou'd fling off her *Load*, very eaſily; " But, they tell me, ſhe wou'd then be under ter- " rible Apprehenſions, from certain *Raw Currs*, " which have an unnatural kind of *Bark*, like the " *Hiſs* of a Serpent; and wou'd go near to be *ſet* " *upon* her, by ſome *over-keen Sportſmen*, who fol- " low their *Game*, into the *Boxes*.

" SUCH a *Fear*, I can aſſure you, is very far " from ill-grounded. — I have ſeen ſeveral Ex- " amples of their *Worrying* her: Some *Few*, too, " I have ſeen, of their *Enduring* her: — But I defy " any Man to point out a Time (within moderate " Memory) when they Receiv'd her, with *Honour*, " and *Reverence*. — MOBBS indeed have ſometimes " been *hir'd* in her Favour, to introduce her with " *Uproar*, and *Tumult:* But Theſe, like the *Greaſy* " *Surrounders* of *State Coaches*, upon ſolemn Occa- " ſions, hanging offenſively upon her *Harneſs*, en- " creaſe but the Weight of her Motion: furiouſly " *retarding* the Progreſs, to which they were call'd " to give *Furtherance*. I am,

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

Your unknown Friend,

Q, in the Corner.

Printed for T. COOPER, at the *Globe* in *Pater noſter Row:* Where Letters to the AUTHOR are taken in. And where the former Numbers may be had.

[*Price Two-Pence.*]